

MODERN FREETHINKER

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National Convention on Secularisation of Public Life

The Indian Rationalist Association plans to organize a convention to initiate national discussion on the secularisation of public life, at Hyderabad on 14th and 15th March, 1987. Leaders of public opinion, individuals holding responsible position in public life, and representatives of organisations who are firmly committed to secularisation of public life are expected to participate in this convention. Dr. Vinod Kumar Gaur, Chairman of Indian Rationalist Association (also Director, National Geographic Research Institute) is the co-ordinator of this major event.

(More details about the "Convention on Secularisation of Public Life" will appear in the next issue of Modern Freethinker)

National Conference of Indian Rationalist Association at Kerala in 1987

The 14th National Conference (Biennial National Conference) of Indian Rationalist Association will be held at Ernakulam, Kerala in May 1987, alongwith the Kerala State level rationalist conference which marks the 31st year of existence of the present Rationalist Association of Kerala. All national level rationalist activists are expected to participate in the forthcoming National Conference.

A decision on the above two national level programmes has been taken at a joint meeting of the National Executive Committee and National Council of Indian Rationalist Association, held at Hyderabad on 14th December 1986. The Chairman, President, General Secretary and National Council members from six states attended the council meeting. Policy resolutions passed by the National Council meeting are given in the next few pages.

—Editor

Modern Freethinker

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JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

Editor : SANAL EDAMARUKU

Resolutions adopted by the National Council of
Indian Rationalist Association

Growing rise of communalism

The National Council of Indian Rationalist Association expresses its concern at the growing rise of communalist and obscurantist forces in the country. The use of religious places like temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras by the reactionary forces for political purposes is reprehensible and prejudicial to the security and integrity of the country. It is appalled at the increasing submission of the governments at the centre and the states to the irrational threats of the orthodox and traditionalist forces.

The citizens have right to information and as such they are entitled to write, publish and read criticisms of religious texts and literature. In this connection, the National Council expresses its vehement protest against the ban on the performance of the Malayalam drama, 'Sixth Holy Wound of Christ', and the arrest of the editor of Udayam (Telugu daily from Hyderabad).

The Indian Rationalist Association has a strong feeling that the governments are either directly aiding or conniving at the strengthening of religiously motivated institutions to spread sectarian and communal ideas, as is evidenced by the happenings in Delhi, Punjab and even in placid Karnataka.

The National Council of Indian Rationalist Association deems it to be its duty to sound a note of warning to the people and governments to beware of the coterie that spreads false notions about secularism. It demands that the government shall separate religion and state and to strive for the elimination of association of the activities of religion and state.

January 1987

University course in astrology !

The Indian Rationalist Association vehemently protests against the introduction of a course in Astrology, a pseudo-science, at several universities including Kerala University of Trivandrum, and Telugu University of Hyderabad. Scientists are of firm opinion that astrology does not fall within the purview of the definition of science and as such it does not deserve a place in university curriculum.

Intrusion of foreign money

The National Council of Indian Rationalist Association grues with great concern the intrusion of foreign money into this country's public life by aid or help or assistance, either directly or indirectly, to the activities of reactionary, orthodox, religious, communal and fundamentalist forces.

Compelling pupils to recite prayers

The Indian Rationalist Association condemns the activities of some state aided educational institutions which compel pupils to attend and recite prayers and call upon the government of Kerala, where this practice is very much prevalent, to put an end to this nefarious procedure.

Building of worship centres at public places

The Indian Rationalist Association is constrained to bring it to the notice of the public that many anti-social persons are resorting to the unwholesome practice of building worship and prayer centres at public places, including bus depots, road margins, and other government lands without proper permission from the authorities established by law. It regrets the reticent, if not connivance, of the authorities, and demands the government to take action against the erring individuals. These kind of attitudes and actions are detrimental to the interest of the people and state, for they contribute to the growth of conflicting sectarian groups, besides causing nuisance to the citizens.

M.V. Ramamurthy to file writ

The National Council authorised Mr. M. V. Ramamurthy, the President of Indian Rationalist Association to file a writ in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, on behalf of the Association for the removal of worship centres from bus stations, which are owned, controlled and managed by the road transport corporation—a semi-government institution.

(These do not include organisational resolutions)

Kerala Rationalist family festival

The Kerala State branch of Indian Rationalist Association is organising a Rationalist family festival on 26th January 1987, at Kottayam. Mr Joseph Edamaruku, Vice-President of IRA and the person who was instrumental for the formation of the present Rationalist Association of Kerala (in 1956) will inaugurate the family festival. It is expected that nearly 500 rationalist families will participate in the festival, where they will exchange experiences of social struggles at their own localities.

Maharashtra Rationalist Association

Dr. L. B. Kenny, the President of Maharashtra Rationalist Association informs that the association is planning to organise a discussion meeting at Bombay on the different disciplines of Medicine. Reputed practitioners of various medical systems namely Ayurveda, Unani, Acupuncture, Homeopathy, Modern English medical system et. al, will be invited to speak on the fundamentals of their system of medicine. The discussion meeting is expected to be held sometime next month.

God and Prayer Debunked

Varkey Shantistan

Man created god in his own image. This is a very true saying. Man has certain faults and failings. And he has created a god that suits these shortcomings, so that he may feel complacent.

Most men have some idea of the basic laws of nature, of life. They may not have discovered all of them, nor may they have any clear and definite conception of them. Yet they know enough to live fairly well if only they try hard to live up to them. But there is a certain amount of idleness and irresponsibility in us. Therefore, we seek all kinds of shortcuts to happiness. And belief in a personal god is one such shortcut. We create a god to whom we transfer our responsibility. It is easier to take it to the god in prayer than to face life fairly and squarely, taking up the challenge of its laws.

We do not work hard enough to maintain ourselves and our family. So, we ask god to help us in our distress and to look after our wife and children. We do not observe the laws of health and then expect god to cure our diseases. The student does not study enough and wants god to pass him in examinations. We commit all kinds of wrongs and break elementary moral laws and then ask god to forgive our trespasses.

In our dealings with other people in life, we try all kinds of tactics to further our interests. We thank our friends for their help so that they may continue to help us. Similarly we thank god for "giving us" our daily bread. We praise people in order to win favours from them. Likewise we sing god's praise and extol his mercy and loving kindness in order to get favour from god. We try to win the favour of people in high places through the back door, i. e. through their wives or mothers. Similarly, Christians try to win Christ's favour through the intervention of Virgin Mary. We relish good food, especially meat. So, we think that god also likes good food, and offer him birds and animals as sacrifices.

If we educate our children scientifically in early years, how many of them will believe in god or pray to him? A child brought up by a bear in the jungle will never kneel down in prayer, nor sing god's praise, nor thank him for the food he gets. Religious believers put out their children's eyes in early childhood and so they have no option but to live blind right through life.

It is more in keeping with our reason, common sense and experience to believe that nature or the universe is self-sufficient, self sustaining and autonomous. Life and nature have certain laws or principles, and all that we can do and should do is to try hard to discover them and live in tune with them.

What is prayer? Some maintain that it is meditation or concentrated thinking. But it is better to call a spade a spade. Prayer is not meditation nor any other kind of mental exercise.

Prayer is an attempt to get into certain relationship with a god in whom one believes. Its contents are generally praises, thanksgivings and requests. Let us analyse them one by one.

We praise another in order to please him and get something out of him. Man is vainglorious and so will yield to sycophancy. But is god vainglorious and does he respond to praises showered on him? We judge god by our own standards, for, he is the creation of our own mind.

Does the son thank the father daily for supporting him when he cannot support himself? If god is our loving father, he will not expect us to thank him for his kindness. We often thank another for his help so that the help may be repeated.

Request to god for favours is the silliest of all prayers. We pray for all kinds of favours, the destitute for wealth, the diseased for health, the student for promotion, the jobseeker for employment etc etc.

What is a favour? It is help or reward given where it is not deserved. This means injustice to the deserving. A god who promotes a student who has not done well in the examination is doing injustice to the other examinees. Giving a job to the

undeserving is doing injustice to the deserving. Giving health to those who break the laws of health is injustice done to those who observe the laws of health. Any favour done to the undeserving is disfavour done to the deserving. A favour can be done only at the expense of others. Asking god for favours is expecting injustice.

Imagine the numerous kinds of favours asked of god in prayer. They are all contradictory to one another. They neutralise or negate one another. They cancel themselves out in the end. Praying god is the silliest thing man can do. It is an utter waste of time. It gives man false hopes. It is shirking responsibility. It is baseless and foolish.

Hindi version of One Lakh Challenge

Bihar Buddhivadi Samaj, a Rationalist Association of Patna has brought out a Hindi pamphlet containing the challenge of Sanal Edamaruku (on behalf of Indian Rationalist Association), against the godmen all over the world. Earlier, Mrs Kawaljit, organising secretary of Bihar Buddhivadi Samaj has been appointed the representative at Bihar regarding this challenge. Copies of the pamphlet are available at the central office. Those who require Hindi or English version of the challenge are requested to write to Indian Rationalist Association, Post Box 2713, New Delhi-110005.

Superstition has given us delusions and illusions, dreams and visions, ceremonies and cruelties, faith and fanaticism, beggars and bigots, persecutions and prayers, theology and torture, piety and poverty, saints and slaves, miracles and mumeries, disease and death.

—Ingersoll

The Challenge against godmen

Purushotham Dass Malhotra lost his deposit

The famous challenge of Indian Rationalist Association against godmen and miracle-men who claim to possess miraculous powers, to prove their feat in fraud-proof conditions, has always forced many a godmen to get exposed. The most recent in this series happened in Patiala district of Punjab.

One Mr. Purushotham Das Malhotra, a notorious 'sant' of Bassi Pathana, Patiala District, claimed that he could physically harm anyone with his supernatural powers. Catching his claim, the Amloh unit of Rationalist Society of Punjab, an affiliated state wing of the Indian Rationalist Association, asked Purushotham Das to perform his feat and thereby own Rs. One Lakh offered by the Indian Rationalist Association. The godman not only accepted the challenge, but also paid Rs. 1000 to the Amloh unit as security, which received wide press coverage in the state.

The venue and the date of the test were mutually agreed and enough publicity has been given to the public test. However, two days before the test, the godman Malhotra gave a written statement to the Association that he was withdrawing from the test, as he did not have any supernatural power, thereby losing his deposit of Rs. 1000/-. The draft of Rs. 1000/- drawn in favour of Sanal Edamaruku has been donated to Rationalist Society of Punjab.

The man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and is a traitor to himself and his fellowmen.

—Ingersoll

The Experiences of USA and UK

Before I proceed further, I must point out the distinction between a secular State and a secular society. This distinction will be clearer when I refer to a moment to the experiences of the United States and United Kingdom. For the present, we must note that it is possible for a State to be secular without the society itself being secular. In other words, members of a society of a particular State may not be secular in their habits and approach to life, but the State of which they form a part may, as a political entity, remain aloof from religion in the sense mentioned above and may answer the description of secular State. In this essay, I am concentrating my attention on the concept of a secular state and not a secular society. Is the State envisaged under the Constitution of India a secular State? That is the point in question. A brief reference may be made to some of our neighbouring States. It is well-known that Pakistan is an Islamic Republic. Pakistan proclaims that sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to Allah, the Almighty alone. It must be further noted that no person other than a Musalman can be the head of the State of Pakistan. No law which is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and other sacred texts can be enacted in Pakistan. These features of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have remained constant despite the fact that there have been changes of regime from time to time. The Constitution of Burma recognises Buddhism as the State religion. Similarly, Nepal has been proclaimed a Hindu State.

I have already mentioned above that the monarch of England has been awarded the title of the Defender of the Faith. Though Henry VIII broke away from the Roman Church and gave an independent status to the Church of England, the monarchs of England have continued to use that title. The

Church of England is the official Church and this alone is sufficient to show that United Kingdom is not a secular State. It may be mentioned that the people of United Kingdom in their daily lives display a marked sense of secularism in as much as they do not follow religious tenets for solving their secular problems. In this sense one might say that in the United Kingdom there is a secular society though there is no secular State. This of course is only broadly true.

In the United States of America, however, the State is secular while the society itself might not be secular. The first amendment to the Constitution of United States mentions that the Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of a religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. This provision of the American Constitution became the subject matter of interpretation in several cases that went to the Supreme Court of the United States. It is not necessary to refer to all of them. I will make only a brief reference to some of them. Before I do that, however, I mention that at one time there was in the United States itself a feeling that religion as such was not to be excluded from the legitimate concerns of a Government and should in fact form one of the functions of the established Government. However, the other view which was propounded by Jefferson prevailed. That view was expressed by him in a letter which he wrote to a group of Baptists in 1802. While commending the First Amendment, Jefferson pointed out that its purpose was to build "a wall of separation between the Church and State". Seventy-seven years later Chief Justice Waite in *Ronald V. U S* (98 U S. 145-1879) mentioned that this statement of Jefferson was almost an authoritative declaration of the scope and effect of the first Amendment.

In a case which arose after the second world war, namely, *Everson V. The Board of Education* (330 U.S. 1-1947) this view was reaffirmed by a majority judgment of the Supreme Court. The right of local authorities in New Jersey to provide free transportation for children attending parochial schools was involved in that case. That right was upheld on secular grounds. While so doing, it was pointed out that the term "establishment of

religion" mentioned in the First Amendment meant that neither a State nor the Federal Government can set up a Church. Similarly no law which would aid one religion or aid all religions or prefer one religion to another could be passed. Subsequently in another judgment, namely, *McCullum V. The Board of Education* (333 U.S. 203-1948) this separation between the Church and the State was again directly reaffirmed. In this case the question was whether public school buildings could be used for teaching religion to those students whose parents requested for it. The answer was in the negative. Mr. Justice Black, speaking for the Court, said.

Here, not only are the State's tax supported public school buildings used for the dissemination of religious doctrines, the State also affords sectarian groups an invaluable aid in that it helps to provide pupils for the religious classes, through use of the State's compulsory public school machinery. This is not separation of Church and State.

In 1952 by another judgment of 6 to 3, the Supreme Court sustained a New York City "released time" programme under which religious instruction must take place off the school grounds (*Zorach V. Clauson* 343, U.S. 306-1952). The Supreme Court of the United States has also held that recitation of even non-denominational prayers is not permissible in a State-aided school because it gives preferential treatment to persons who believe in religion or God as against those persons who are irreligious or atheists (*Engel V. Vitale* 37 U.S. & 421-1962). The basic feature of the American Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court is this that the State shall not support any religion; it shall not support all religions even without making any distinction among them. It shall also not extend financial assistance to any institution such as a school which imparts directly or indirectly religious instruction. In this sense the United States Constitution can be said to be fully secular.

There are however certain aspects which have been pointed out by some judges who dissented from the majority judgments mentioned by me above. For example, it has been mentioned that the American Government appoints Chaplains in the army

Public meeting at Hyderabad

On the occasion of the joint meeting of the National Council and Executive Committee of Indian Rationalist Association, a public meeting was held at Press Club, Hyderabad on 15th December 1986. Vasi Reddi Sita Devi, a reputed Telugu novelist presided over the meeting.

Mr. Avula Samba Siva Rao, Lok Ayukta of Andhra Pradesh (former Chief Justice, A. P. High Court and former Vice-Chancellor Andhra University) who was one of the early General Secretaries of Indian Rationalist Association, in his inaugural address expressed his concern over the growing communalism and fundamentalism in the country. He reflected on the days when he looked after the day-to-day affairs of the association, and expressed happiness that the IRA is active now than ever before.

Prof. L. B. Kenny (President, Maharashtra Rationalist Association), Sanal Edamaruku (General Secretary, Indian Rationalist Association), Ravipudi Venkatadri (President, Andhra Pradesh Rationalist Association) and Malladi Subbamma (Vice-President, Andhra Pradesh Rationalist Association) were among the speakers. Sreeni Pattathanam (Secretary, Kerala Rationalist Association) performed a Divine Miracle Exposure programme. M. V. Ramamurthy, earlier, welcomed the guests.

for holding prayers for the soldiers. If this could be done at the expense of the public exchequer, it has been asked, why the schools also should not be given religious education? This question has not been satisfactorily answered.

(Contd. next issue)

The basic requirements

Joseph Edemaru

The teachers of yore have said that food, rest, sleep and sex are the basic animal instincts. Beasts have only these four urges or wants. Humans too have all these innate impulses. It is not enough for humans to satisfy these urges or wants only. Human necessities of life can be listed as follows :—

1. Food
2. Clothing
3. Shelter
4. Sleep
5. Sex
6. Work
7. Rest
8. Recreation
9. Freedom
10. Knowledge
11. Social relations
12. Health.

All human beings may not be content with the satisfaction of these wants alone. All humans who were born in this world want more or less to get such satisfaction. But in all these fields one faces many problems.

Food

Man's greatest need, is food. It is from food that one gets sustenance to work, to play, to work etc. It helps the body to grow in strength and health. If you give up food for a few days, you will die. Every year very large number of people die due to starvation. There are millions of people who are under fed. The exploitation that runs rampant in the spheres of production and distribution is the main cause for poverty and starvation. The manifold diversities and labour and the prob-

lems they push up in this field are topics that have to be discussed here.

Most of the items of man's food are obtained from plants, animals and birds. All the people of the world do not take the same kind of food. The staple food of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Orissa is rice. Eskimos subsist on fish and meat alone. The main diet of the people of Central America is milk and its products. The Red Indians of Panama prefer fruits. The North Indians like wheat. These likes and dislikes took shape on the basis of the availability of food materials in each region. Most people do not pay attention to choose nutritious food materials nor to discover new ones. Our diet habits have been conditioned to a large extent by religions, caste differences, customs etc.

The Brahmins of Kerala eschew fish and meat. They say that fish and meat are meant for low castes. They look down upon those who take fish and meat. Because the Brahmins who are considered to be the upper caste do not eat fish or meat, some others also, just to show caste-superiority, abstain from such food. On the other hand, the Brahmins of Bengal who claim a superior caste halo than the Kerala Brahmins think that fish is a must among their dishes. They do not see anything untoward in that. North India is the place of the origin of Hinduism. It is there that the epics and Vedas were compiled. The Hindus of those regions prize themselves that they are more Hindu than others and hence more of purists. Most of them have not banned fish or meat from their diet.

The Brahmins of Kashmir also are not averse to meat. It can be seen that the Saraswatha Brahmins were used to fish eating from their folk lore and legends. All of which shows that the insistence of the Kerala Brahmins on abstaining from non-vegetarian food is unfounded and unreasonable.

Although the Brahmins of the North eat meat, even the Sudras (the lowest caste) keep away from eating beef. Cow slaughter is a great sin, not to mention eating mutton is not objectionable. Cow slaughter is not banned in the states of

Kerala, West Bengal, Assam, Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya. The people of these states are used to eat beef. To them it is not sinful. In many places in North India, buffallow meat is abundantly available. Although killing a cow or an ox is legally banned, killing buffalows, sheep, chicken, duck or pigs and eating their meat are not objectionable. If you ask them about the rationale of this practice, they will say that it is their belief. A scrutiny of Hindu epics and Vedas will show that even the great Hindu sages were used to eating meat. Then how did this belief take root? In an age when cattle were the chief wealth, some restrictions were imposed on cattle killing. In the course of time these restrictions became immovable. Even those who do not take kindly to fish and meat will not object to onions. The Jains of North India abjure red onions. They think it is a sin to eat onions. It is a very strange reason that they advance. When devas and asuras together churned the Ocean of milk, amruth (manna) was gained. One of the asuras drank a portion of it. Immediately a deva gave him a cut with the sword. The blood from the wound fell on the earth below. All the plants in the locality where the blood fell became red. Thus the onions turned the red. How could the onions that became red by being all smeared over by the blood of the asura be eaten? Apart from onions, there are many edible things that are red. The Jains do not say that all those eatables are vitiated by the blood of the asuras.

The Jews also have inhibitions about some food materials. Their Bible enumerates the things that can and cannot be eaten.

The Jews believe that it is a command of god. Their god sanctioned the eating of the meat of cow, the sacred animal of the Hindus. But the meat of camel, rabbit, pig, lobster etc., all very tasty, are prohibited. In god's opinion, they are all impure. The Christians who accept the Bible have rejected many of these "commands" of god. The meat of pig is one of the dainty dishes of the dinner tables of Christian countries. Likewise many food stuffs prescribed against by god can be seen on the dinner tables of the westerners.

As are the Jews, Hindus, Christians and Muslims too are banned from eating some kinds of food. "Can True believers; eat from the good things I have given you. If you bow before him he has prescribed for you carcass, blood, pork and that are butchered in his and not in the names other than his name" Quran 2:172,173. Though there are only this much injunctions in Quran, the Muslim scholars of later time have formulated a list of eatables and uneatables. Some Muslim scholars wanted to overstep the enjoinings of Koran and make a detailed list. They were confounded in the end. Who can count and names of all the species of animals and birds in the world? Ultimately some great scholars derived as follows. Every thing, the Arabs relish is pure and every thing else is impure. This created an objection in the minds of some other scholars. They said that there are very poor people also among the Arabs. When hunger becomes very acute, they might eat any being that comes handy. So drawing the line in such a manner is not enough. Hence the differentiation should be like this; every thing the affluent Arabs like to eat is pure, that they dislike is impure.

There are some particular reasons why religions disfavour some kind of food. There were some taboos as to this among the wild tribes. Religions were blindly copying them. Let us take the instance of pig. The Jews and the Muslims alike think that pork is profane. Why, I asked many Muslim scholars. One told me that because pig is used to eating the human excrement, it is a dirty animal. Then I asked him what about chicken? His answer has been that chicken was pure and so could be eaten. When I reminded him that chicken also are used to that eating habit, he replied that pigs wallow in mud and hence the ban. If this argument holds good, you cannot eat fish that live in muddy water. Fish eat even corpses besides shit. They only absorb or assimilate what their bodies require. Those things do not enter their flesh. As such so, it does not follow that they are impure.

Sometime back it has been found that certain kinds of worms can penetrate into the skin of pigs. Immediately some Muslim scholars started to say that that was why Allah forbade the eating

of pork. In the days when Quran was written, every one was ignorant of this fact. It was the scientists who discovered it later. They said also that if pork was cooked well, there would be no damage.

The faithful concealed this fact conveniently. The people of the U.S.A. are generally non-vegeterians. One-fourth of their victuals is pork, ham, bacon etc. In China, Brazil etc. breeding pigs is an important vocation. In those countries where science has developed, researches have been conducted about the various aspects of pork. They do not say that it is bad. Then on what basis do the Jews and Muslims denounce pork? There is an old Semetic belief that demons will enter and live in pigs, it so says the Gospel of Matthew (8:30) Marcos (5: 1: 3) Luke (8: 32). Kananyar, who were the enemies of the Jews were used to make sacrificial offerings of pork to their gods. This also might have prompted the Jews to hate porks. There is no reason for the modern man to detest pork.

Hindus have no objection to meat, other than beef. Even so, they reject many things man could eat in the name of customs. Keraltites do not eat frog meat which is abundantly available in Kerala. But frog is exported. The Americans relish it immensely. It is very costly also. They serve dishes of frog leg to their esteemed guests. Keralites disrelish frog legs because they are not accustomed to it. The peoples of the countries of East Asia eat not only frogs but also many kinds of crabs, fish, rats, cats, dogs, some kinds of worms etc. The meat liked most by the Vietnamese is that of the dog. Snake meat is excellent. The people of Burma, Nagaland, Thailand etc. are very fond of it. Some people like the meat of locusts and octopus. Usually those who take meat, throw away the eyes, tongue, genital organs etc. of animals. But there are people who consider those things to be excellent food. An Iranian sect is used to eating the fried eyes of sheep. Still others prefer the tongue.

The people of certain religions and communities had been legally forbidden to make some kinds of food. Social customs

too had imposed some restraints. In South India, what is called Payasa is very much in use. They take payasa just as the westerners take pudding or fruit salad after meal. Payasa in many varieties are prepared there. Until the 18th century, only the high caste Hindus were permitted to prepare it. The "paul and fruit" which the Christians of Kerala serve at the end of their wedding feasts were made by them as an alternative to payasa.

There is no basis for such prohibitions and beliefs regarding food. They might have come into practice in some particular times and particular background. Afterwards they continued unquestioned. It is necessary to re-examine them with a scientific view.

One who habitually ate rice had to live in a place where wheat was the staple food. He felt unwell whenever he ate wheat. He said that wheat would unsettle his stomach. Wheat that was eaten by most of the North Indians and which has more nutritional value than rice, was simply unfit for him. This was only an erroneous notion of his mind. There is a big element of blind imitation in our diet habits and choice of food stuffs. Instead of using indigenous vegetables available in the cities, the people go after those that the foreigners like. It is high time that there should be a revolution in our way of thinking concerning food. It is the duty of the freethinkers to bring about a thorough overhauling in this field. No one is against the idea that food must be tasty and nutritious. If food is cheap and can be had easily, problems will disappear. It is essential for us to give up the taboos and the nonsensical notions that existed on the basis of the misconceptions of bygone ages.

(Contd. next issue)

A note from the editor

Due to certain re-arrangements in the schedule of publication, we could not bring out November and December issues of Modern Freethinker. We expect to maintain periodicity in the future.

—Editor

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